

The chapters on the commonly found childhood illnesses are simple, clear and elegantly compact. Throughout the book the reader is reminded of the vital opportunities for health education afforded in any hospital, clinic, school and local authority's agency.

In the next edition mention might be made of Little's disease, keratomalacia due to absent blink reflex in any ill child, out-patient rehydration centres and the prognosis of the hæmoglobinopathies. Lastly, should tropical prems really receive vitamin K as a routine?

B GANS

Munro Kerr's Operative Obstetrics

7th ed by J Chassar Moir

CBE HONLLD MA MD FRCS(Ed) FRCOG

pp x+1003 illustrated £6 6s

London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox 1964

This is a most impressive book. It is well written, lavishly illustrated and beautifully produced. Originally it was written out of the unrivalled experience of Munro Kerr in Glasgow; now Professor Chassar Moir takes the book into the calmer waters of modern obstetrics, a field in which he too is an acknowledged master. He has been partly or wholly responsible for the revisions of the last three editions, appearing in 1949, 1956 and 1964. This is evidence of its continuing popularity, for the first edition appeared in 1908. There are obvious difficulties in bringing such a work up to date, for it is hard to prune the dead wood but, here, no criticism can be made. There are backward looks to what used to be accepted practice but only to illustrate the evolution of present methods; to follow the course of evolution in this way is educative and instructive. Brief case histories illuminate particular difficulties and it is reassuring to find that not always were the writers splendidly triumphant.

The range of references, over 2,000 of them, is tremendous and views in opposition to the author's are fairly stated and carefully weighed. Nothing is skimmed or glossed over in discussion but Professor Moir never leaves any doubt about his own preferences in treatment nor why he has these preferences. Every postgraduate should read and ought to own this book. In the finer points of operative obstetrics he will refer to it many times in his life.

PHILIP RHODES

Skin Diseases in Africa

by James Marshall MD(London)

pp x+134 illustrated R3

Cape Town: Maskew Miller 1964

In a thoroughly entertaining style this unique essay in epidemiology sets out to draw a picture of the patterns of dermatology seen in the various parts of the huge continent of Africa. The factors

thought important in influencing the incidence of skin disease and then the conditions themselves are considered. The chief conclusions are that race has far less influence on the incidence of dermatoses than is popularly supposed and that the more prosperous the country the nearer does the spectrum of dermatoses approach that seen in Europe or the USA.

It is a pity that comments on dermatoses in South Africa so far outweigh those on all other parts of Africa but perhaps this is difficult to avoid when the information has been collected at Stellenbosch. Some statements leave room for disagreement: for example, it is stated that throughout tropical Africa the leucocyte count is significantly lower in the negro than in the white; that malnutrition probably inhibits viral infections; that erythrasma is rare; that boils may appear in patients on griseofulvin treatment and that pityriasis rosea is spread by fleas. Subcutaneous phycomycosis is mentioned as occurring only in Uganda, yet in the literature are reports from Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroons, Senegal, Ivory Coast and the Sudan.

The appendix contains useful tables on the incidence of dermatoses in various African States as well as in other parts of the world and underlines how little we really know of dermatology in Africa.

The price of 30s is most reasonable, and this is just the book the lucky dermatologist should take to keep him happily interested on the flight to Africa.

R R M HARMAN

Multiple Sclerosis: A Reappraisal

by Douglas McAlpine, Charles E Lumsden

and E D Acheson

pp viii+415 50s

Edinburgh & London: F & S Livingstone 1965

This is a new book and not just a new edition of the older book on multiple sclerosis by two of the authors. It marshalls the known facts regarding its epidemiology, clinical features and laboratory findings.

Dr Acheson's contribution deals with epidemiology; in an excellent and comprehensive review he examines critically the published data on the occurrence of the disease in various parts of the world and the possible implications of its geographical incidence.

Dr McAlpine is responsible for the second part, concerned with the clinical aspects of the disease including such special features as the familial incidence, the questionable role of trauma and the common problem of the differential diagnosis from cervical spondylosis. There is a chapter on treatment and another on the medicosocial problem.

Professor Lumsden is responsible for the third part of the book, dealing with the clinical pathology of the disease. There are chapters on the proteins of cerebrospinal fluid, the metabolism of amino acids in brain, intermediate carbohydrate metabolism and the levels of various enzymes in cerebrospinal fluid and serum. The lipids of the brain and cerebrospinal fluid are given special consideration in view of their possible intimate involvement in this disease. There is also a chapter on the clinical immunology of multiple sclerosis.

The morbid anatomy of multiple sclerosis is intentionally omitted since there is to follow a separate monograph on the subject.

The extensive lists of references, and the provision of both an author index and a subject index at the end, must enhance the value of this splendid book, particularly to the research worker in the many aspects of the disease. It should provide fascinating reading and food for thought for all who come in contact with it.

K J ZILKHA

Blood and Bone Marrow Cell Culture

by H Jackson Woodliff

MB PhD MRCPE MCPA MCPATH DCP DPATH

pp xiv+141 illustrated 30s

London: Eyre & Spottiswoode 1964

This book is a review of the existing techniques, recent results and future possibilities of *in vitro* culture of cells obtained from blood and bone marrow. It is well and clearly written, contains an extensive list of references and, in addition, has the great merit that it assumes the reader has no previous knowledge of the subject.

The early chapters describe methods of tissue culture in general and how they have been applied to the culture of blood and bone marrow cells. The results of culturing normal cells and cells obtained from patients with a wide variety of blood diseases is described, as well as the effects of nutrients, stimulants, such as phytohaemagglutinin, and cytotoxic drugs on such cultures.

These studies have shed some light on the transformation of megakaryoblasts into normoblasts and have shown that it is possible to demonstrate, *in vitro*, that some leukaemic cells are sensitive and others resistant to a particular drug. However, Dr Woodliff concludes that 'from the amount of work that has gone into such studies the positive results appear rather meagre . . . due to the limitations of present technical methods'. He discusses the future possibilities, which are immense, and hopes that some of them will be realized in the next decade.

This is an excellent book for anyone interested in tissue culture techniques and their application to haematology.

G HAMILTON FAIRLEY

Niacin in Vascular Disorders and Hyperlipemia

compiled and edited by Rudolf Altschul

pp xi+306 illustrated \$11

Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas 1964

This book contains a series of articles on the effects of large doses of nicotinic acid. The editor and principal contributor is Dr Altschul, whose work on oxygen tension and serum lipid levels led him to test nicotinic acid, an agent which was known to affect oxidative metabolism. His contribution sets out the way in which the lipid-lowering action of nicotinic acid was studied, and gives a clear account of the pharmacological properties of the agent. One is glad to find that he makes no claim for its therapeutic value, for while it is clear that it lowers lipid levels, there is no evidence so far that it confers benefit on patients.

What emerges very clearly from this book is the frequency with which troublesome side-effects (especially flushing) occur when lipid-lowering doses are given, so that even if lipid reduction comes to occupy a major place in the management of arterial disease, it is unlikely that niacin will be the most useful way of bringing this about. It is also clear that the way in which the serum lipids are reduced is not yet known, and it is of interest that the agent gives the same change in some liver function tests as the more recently introduced clofibrate.

The book is well produced, is commendably free from errors and has a good author and subject index. It is quite expensive, and is likely to be a book to which workers will refer from time to time, in a library, rather than include it in their own personal collection.

J R A MITCHELL

Atlas of Neuropathology

by W Blackwood, T C Dodds

and J C Sommerville

2nd ed pp xii+234 illustrated 60s

Edinburgh & London: E & S Livingstone 1964

The second edition of this useful volume appears fifteen years after the first, and at a time when students, especially postgraduates, are expected to devote more attention than formerly to the subject of neuropathology. For this reason this atlas, more detailed than its predecessor, is especially welcome, for Professor Blackwood and his colleagues have succeeded in presenting in simple form, and have admirably expressed the essential facts concerning, the commoner occurrences in neuropathological practice. Particularly helpful are the comparative photographs; for instance, we are shown the normal as well as infarcted cortex as revealed with Pickworth's stain and the astrocytes in the normal cortex as well as that in GPI as seen by Cajal's method. The lesions are